Education
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Enhanced Supports Provided for Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Students

Hearing-impaired students across Newfoundland and Labrador now have access to improved FM amplification systems, which will greatly enhance their learning experience in the classroom. The Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education, said today that $209,000 has been invested to provide 110 systems at schools throughout the province and at the Newfoundland School for the Deaf.

"Research indicates that hearing-impaired students who have access to personal FM amplification systems tend to do better," said Minister Burke. "They show increased attention in the classroom, improved understanding and stronger academic performance. For teachers, it means less repetition of lessons, increased mobility and improved teaching opportunities."

The new FM systems are wireless and include a microphone worn by the teacher. A small receiver is connected to the bottom of the student's hearing aid or a cochlear implant. With the teacher's voice transmitted directly to the student, interference from such things as noise, echoes and distance is restricted and the learning experience for the student is improved.

"More than ever before, as a result of advancements in technology, hearing-impaired students are opting to attend their community school," said Minister Burke. "When this choice is made, the necessary supports have been put in place to assist these students and help ensure their success."

As an example, there are currently seven students of the Newfoundland School for the Deaf who spend half-days at Gonzaga High School in St. John's. Supports for these students include educational interpreters, specialized teachers of the deaf and hearing-impaired and real-time captioning.

"These students are doing very well in their studies and I am pleased that we have been able to accommodate their needs," said Minister Burke. "While we remain fully committed to the Newfoundland School for the Deaf, providing education to deaf students is about choice. Students may choose to go to their local school with special support provided and indeed, it is their right to have access to public schools. Students may also opt to attend the School for the Deaf. As a government, we have a responsibility to the individual student to provide them with the resources and supports they need, such as the new FM systems, no matter where they choose to learn."

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Media contact:

Jacquelyn Howard
Director of Communications
Department of Education
709-729-0048, 689-2624
jacquelynhoward@gov.nl.ca

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